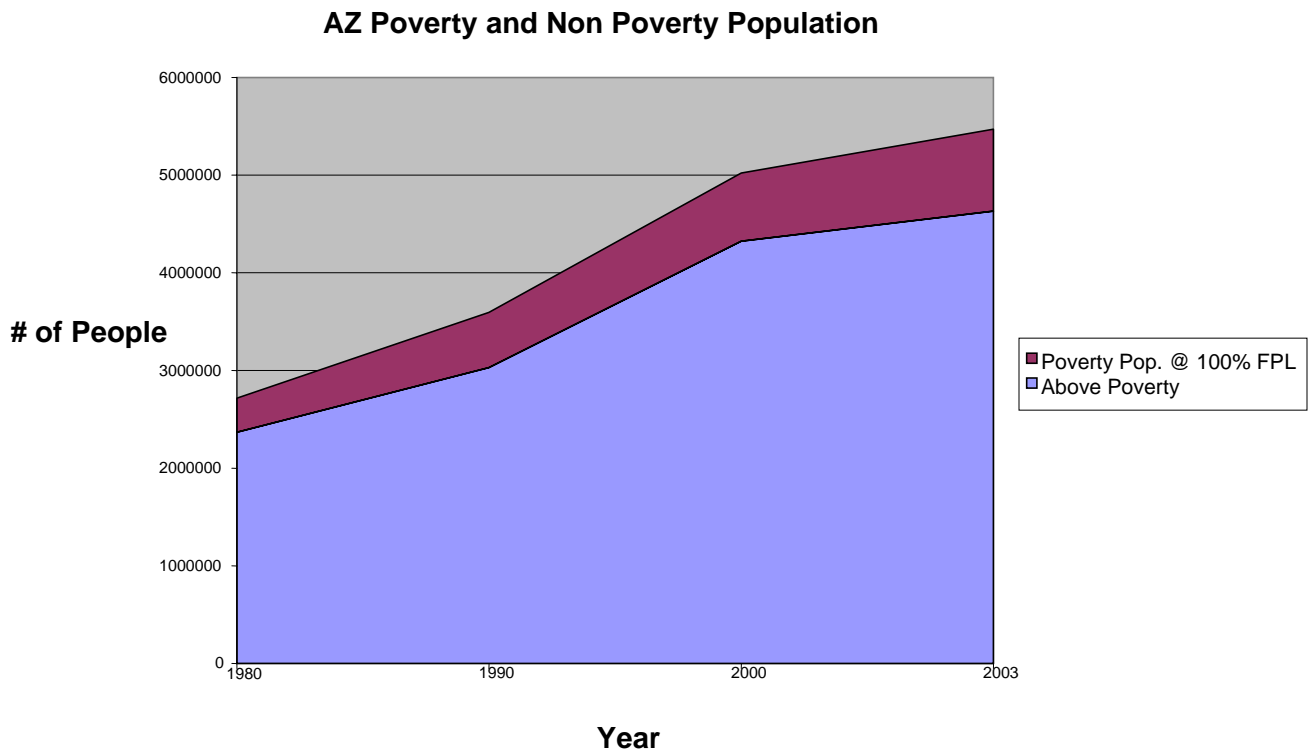


Arizona Hunger Action Council
A Council of the Arizona Department of Economic Security

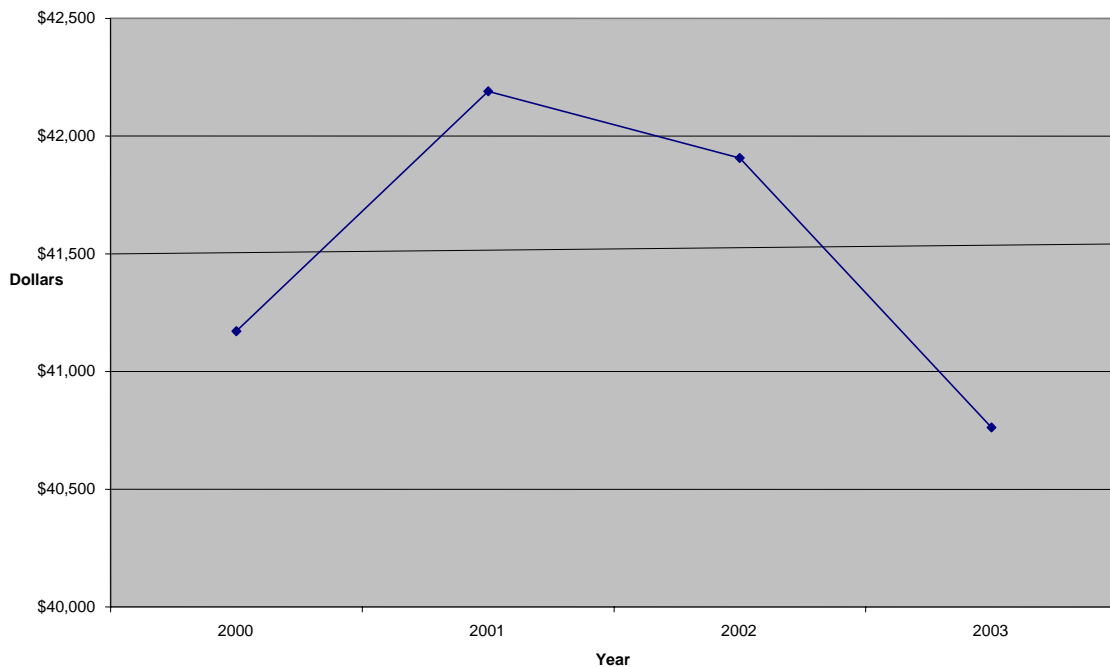
HUNGER REPORT 2005

The Hunger Action Council believes that our state can only achieve the greatness that is our potential if every man, woman and child has adequate and nutritious food. It is only when their hunger is fully satisfied that they can hunger to achieve their full potential. The charts and information provided in this report are presented to help focus our state's attention on eliminating hunger so that all Arizonans will have access to the food they need, when they need it, in the way that is most healthful using their own resources. We hope you will join us in this effort.

**Arizona Population vs. Population in Poverty Growth
1980 to 2003**



AZ Household Median Annual Income

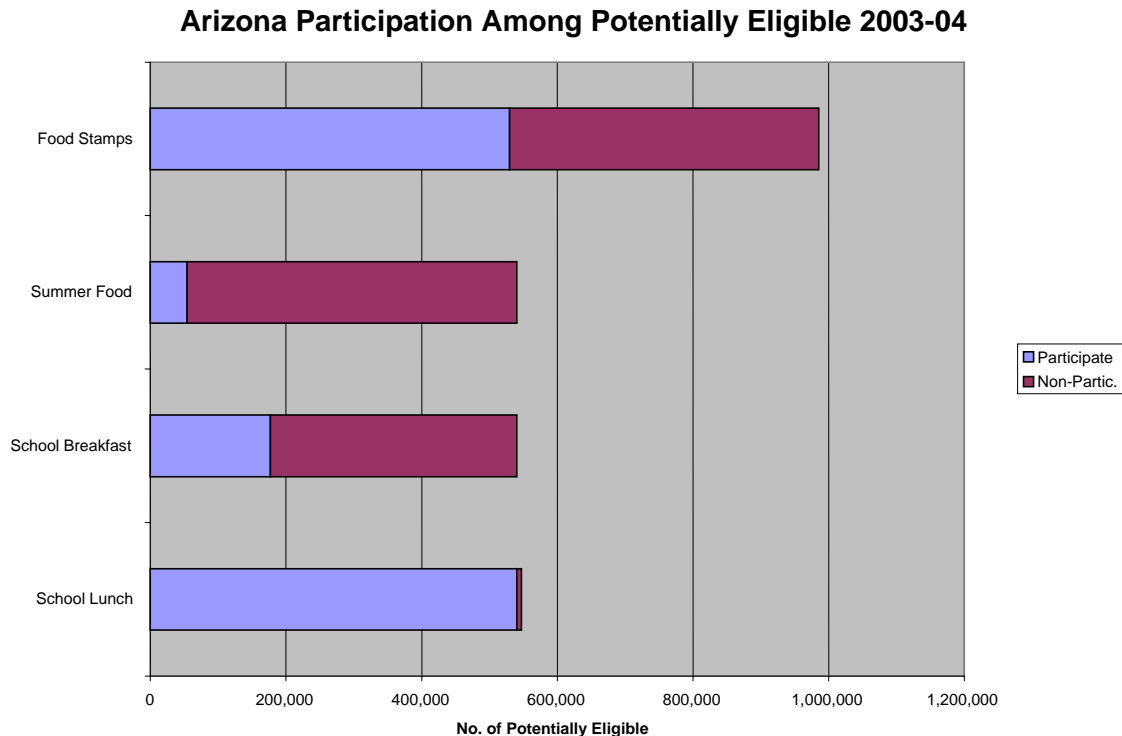


Facts: The federal poverty level is updated annually. The formula to calculate it is known to be flawed, however, it is the only generally accepted method and is used by numerous programs to determine eligibility. It is based upon three times the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan. While some consider it to be a minimal amount needed for meeting basic essentials, most programs, except for Food Stamps directed toward the low income population consider households eligible when income is at or below 185% of the poverty level. For a family of three in Arizona, that standard is \$2,481 per month (or \$29,767 annually).

Observations: The Hunger Action Council has regularly held its meetings throughout the State and has heard from local representatives who have consistently reported on increasing needs among low-income folks, especially the working poor and those living in rural areas, despite all the efforts put forth to help.

Action: The Council has been engaged in and has continued to recommend increased outreach and funding for existing nutrition programs, including policy and legislative changes which would reflect factors such as transportation, housing and child care costs.

Participation Among Potentially Eligible Population



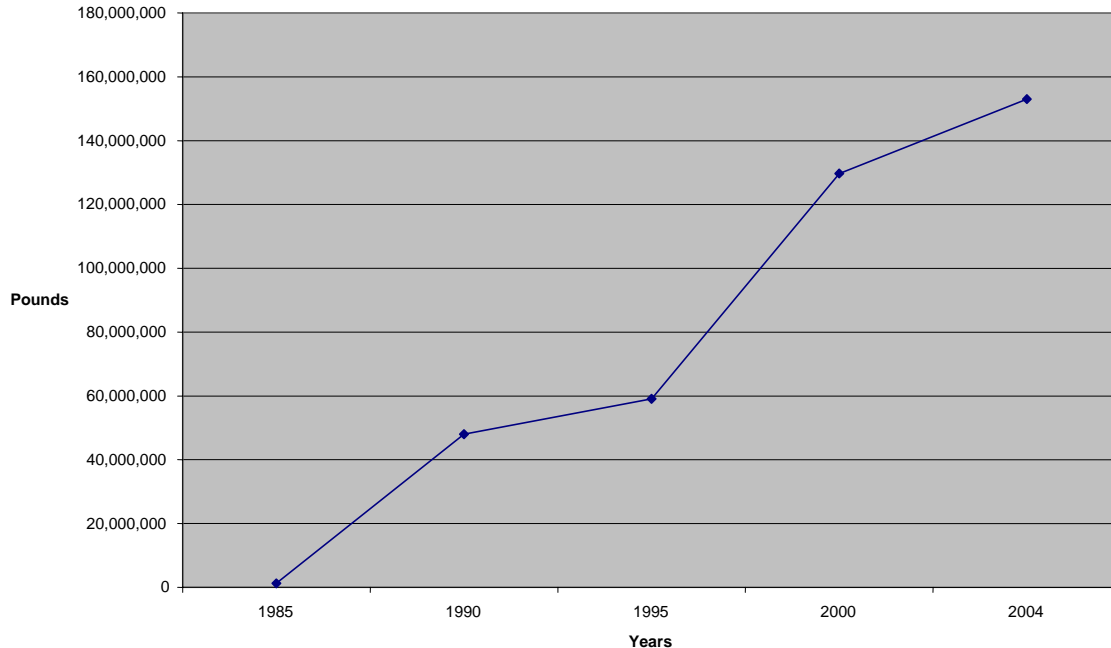
Facts: : Because of varying eligibility criteria, not all low-income people would be eligible for every program, but the programs--which have the potential for providing significant assistance--are under-utilized.

Observations: With time limits and the emphasis upon working, fewer people now than in the past receive cash assistance (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families). However, the numbers of the working poor continue to increase. Over the years, the Council has noted local and statewide efforts consistently falling short. Particularly in native American and isolated communities, unmet needs are evident. Having a food pantry or emergency system for food delivery may have emerged in various communities, but major changes are needed to provide food security for all Arizonans.

Actions: Increased education and outreach are essential along with improved program access if nutrition assistance programs are to serve all those who are eligible. Improved policy development and funding is needed so that programs to serve low-income people may reflect the continued increase in the cost of living and static income levels.

Emergency Needs Continue to Rise

AZ Food Banks' Distributions 1985 to 2004



Facts: The distribution of donated food through the network of food banks has continued to increase steadily since 1985. Along with the working poor, families with children, seniors, and the disabled are among the growing client base. Requests for emergency food occur because of the gap between federal nutrition assistance programs and private charitable efforts. To completely meet Arizona's emergency and supplemental food needs of all our citizens, it has been estimated that the amount of donated food would need to be doubled.

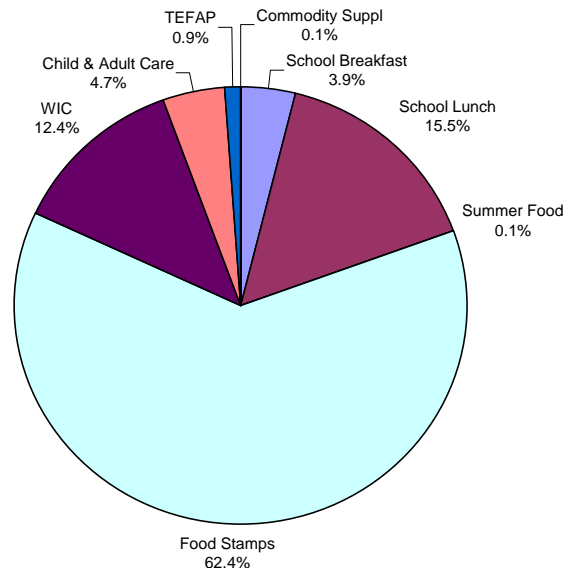
Observations: In our meetings around the State and from other reports, the Council has noted the growth in the number of emergency food outlets (soup kitchens, pantries, food banks, and food distribution sites), but the best of commendable local efforts have not kept pace with increasing needs. Expansion of programs such as food cooperatives, community and individual gardens, Kids Cafes, and more emergency locations have helped, but the need remains extreme for many populations. More emergency food pantries and soup kitchens are not the answer to the problem of food insecurity.

Action: The Council has been able to assist in the development and coordination of efforts to meet local needs, but the continued cooperation and coordination of the existing food network organizations is needed for greatest

effectiveness. Systemic efforts also need to be undertaken so that food security is attained in all our communities.

What is hunger costing Arizona?

Percentage of \$926M in Federal Nutrition Assistance to AZ in 2004 by Program



Facts: While the average benefit per meal to Arizonans receiving Food Stamps is \$1.04, nearly \$578 million in federal funds comes to Arizona annually in this nutrition program. In addition to feeding at risk people, the money makes a significant contribution to the State's economy. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has estimated that between three and five dollars additionally (in retail sales, jobs, etc.) is generated for every \$1 spent by a Food Stamp participant. Because of under-utilization, Arizona is failing to capitalize on millions of dollars which could support our economy and prevent the loss of human potential when undernourished children and adults seek to keep pace in learning and on the job.

Observations: : In our visits around the State, rural communities especially have spoken of an urgent need to develop jobs and expand opportunities for their residents. Federal nutrition dollars could benefit not only individual households but also economic benefits to their communities and the State.

Actions: All departments of state government administering nutrition assistance programs need to work more aggressively to reduce barriers to participation, to

foster inter-agency cooperation, and to engage the retail and business communities so that all may benefit by increased participation.

The Hunger Action Council is a statewide body, established by the Arizona Legislature in 1986. Membership continues to change, but diversity in background, geography, and expertise is maintained. Our purpose is to advise the Director of the Department of Economic Security and other interested parties on matters relating to the entire range of food security issues in Arizona. This brief overview has been developed to further understanding of the issues, so that systemic, programmatic and fiscal changes may be developed and supported to benefit all of Arizona.

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